

Green 10 PRESS STATEMENT

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Concerns remain over Juncker Commission's commitment to environment

With today's vote by the European Parliament a new political phase begins in the European Union.

The Green 10 alliance of leading environmental organisations calls on President Juncker and his team of Commissioners to give European citizens, and their future generations, a healthy, inclusive and environmentally sound place to live.

Angelo Caserta, Director of Birdlife Europe and Chair of the Green 10 stated: *"In these trying times of ecological crisis, recession, and rising inequality, we need President Juncker's Commission to prove it is up to the challenge. Europe requires environmentally, socially and economically sustainable policies and innovation that benefit people."*

"In the last decade, unregulated growth has produced economic instability, inequality and unprecedented degradation of the environment. What Europe does not need is the continuation of the same old policies and ideologies," he added.

Since the first line-up of the new Commission was presented, civil society organisations, progressive businesses, forward-looking MEPs, and the President of the European Parliament have expressed strong concerns and asked a new road map for true development based on sustainability, environmental protection, and bold action against climate change.

While we welcome that some small improvements have been made, notably on the inclusion of sustainability in the portfolio of the First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, the commitment to keep medicines and pharmaceutical products with the Commission's directorate for health, and a more cautious approach to the Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Green 10 remains gravely concerned that the Juncker Commission could see a serious downgrading of environmental policy.

In particular the Green 10 remains concerned that:

- the mandate of the Commissioner-designate for Environment, Fisheries & Maritime Affairs contains no explicit task to fully implement the 7th Environment Action Programme and implies a weakening of the Birds and Habitats Directives and backpedalling on key legislative proposals on air quality and the circular economy;
- the mandate and title of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans still do not specifically reflect his responsibility for sustainability and the Political Guidelines which are to serve as the main reference for deciding which new initiatives will come out of the Commission contain virtually no reference to the environment other than climate;
- Furthermore, there is not enough clarity about how responsibility for climate and energy policy will be divided between First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič and Commissioner for Climate and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete;
- A number of commissioners have been appointed against a background of considerable public disquiet with respect to their competence, commitment and independence.

Caserta continued: *"Mr Juncker and his team need to show they are able and willing to take Europe forward, towards sustainable development with job creation and environmental justice. Our organisations will continue to act as watchdogs for the interests of people and the environment."*

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